



# WASHOE COUNTY

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## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 9, 2014

**DATE:** August 20, 2014

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Ken Retterath, Interim Director, Department of Social Services  
(775) 785-8600, kretterath@washoecounty.us

**THROUGH:** Kevin Schiller, Assistant County Manager

**SUBJECT:** Authorize the Department of Social Services to accept a work program funding in the amount of \$286,264, that was approved by the State Interim Finance Committee (IFC) August 27, 2014, in State General Fund authority to support Specialized Foster Home placements retroactively from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget adjustments. (All Commission Districts)

### SUMMARY

Authorize the Department of Social Services to accept a work program funding in the amount of \$286,264 that was approved by the State Interim Finance Committee (IFC) August 27, 2014, in State General Fund authority to support Specialized Foster Home placements retroactively from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

**Strategic Objective supported by this item:** Safe, Secure and Healthy Communities.

### PREVIOUS ACTION

In April 2014, the Board authorized Social Services to accept an additional \$300,518 in State General Fund authority to support the Specialized Foster Care Program.

In November 2012, the Board authorized Social Services to enter into Agreements with foster care providers and agency treatment homes to provide Specialized Foster Care and accepted an additional \$227,313 in State General Fund authority to support the Specialized Foster Care Program.

AGENDA ITEM # 10

## **BACKGROUND**

On December 9, 2013 the Legislative Interim Finance Committee approved additional funding in the amount of \$300,518 to support the Washoe County Social Services Specialized Foster Care Pilot program for fiscal year 2014. Today, there are vulnerable children being raised by Nevada's child welfare agencies. Some of them spend their childhoods in expensive institutions and are continuously transferred from one foster home to the next, and the next, and the next. This contributes to unimaginable trauma. Once children experience these patterns, they are more likely to stay in this fluctuating system and unstable placements into adulthood never to land with a forever family. It is our goal to ensure that each child has a functioning family and a safe permanent home. What we know for certain, is that children develop best when they are connected to loving and stable families. As the child welfare agency we need to re-examine and modify our efforts when we fall short of this mission. For that reason, our Specialized Foster Care system is in need of reform.

As defined in NRS424.018 a Specialized Foster Home means a family home which provides full-time care and services for one to six children who:

- Require special care for physical, mental or emotional issues;
- Are under 21 years of age;
- Are not related within the first degree of consanguinity or affinity to any natural person maintaining or operating the home;
- Are received, cared for and maintained for compensation; and
- Are in the custody of and placed in the home by an agency which provides child welfare services.

Child welfare agencies have further defined quality aspects of Specialized Foster Care as a family-based, service delivery approach providing individualized treatment for a child and their family. Treatment is delivered through integrated services with key interventions and supports provided by foster parents, who are trained, supervised and supported by qualified program staff.

The placement and case management of foster children in Specialized Foster Care presents significant challenges to achieving successful outcomes, both clinically and fiscally in addition to the following gaps:

- Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation efforts are fragmented, making it difficult to monitor the effectiveness of Specialized Foster Care.
- A significant percentage of youth placed in Specialized Foster Care stay for over 2 years with many failing to achieve a permanent placement before aging out of the system.
- Most treatment home providers lack a coherent practice model; systematic staff training; outcome based practice; and the use of evidence based practices.

- The assessment and treatment quality in Specialized Foster Care settings vary widely across providers and is often fragmented and uncoordinated. Youth often move from placement to placement after multiple “placement failures.”
- The current fiscal system has moved from a bundled to an unbundled rate that has been plagued with wide variability in cost at similar levels of care, fraud allegations, drastic changes in medical necessity criteria, and frequent denials of care that result in placement delays and disruptions.

In order to obtain better outcomes for youth in Specialized Foster Care in Washoe County who are in the custody of Social Services, we worked with the State Division of Child and Family Services and Clark County Department of Family Services to seek and obtain approval from the State Interim Finance Committee to carve out funding from the current Division of Health Care Financing and Policy budget to fund a Pilot program to provide a redesigned specialized foster care system for approximately 30 foster children in Washoe County, 30 in Clark County and 10 in the Rural Region, for a total of 70 statewide. On August 23, 2012 the Legislative Interim Finance Committee approved this request. This approval included the initial transfer of \$227,313 of General Funds and \$150,290 of additional Title IV-E authority to support the additional cost of the Pilot program for Washoe County Social Services. On December 9, 2013 the Legislative Interim Finance Committee approved this additional funding in the amount of \$300,518 of General Funds to support the Washoe County Social Services Pilot program for fiscal year 2014.

Funding for the Specialized Foster Care placements should promote the achievement of permanent placements, clinical recovery, and habilitative care for the child as well as a stable and sufficient reimbursement for providers.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

On August 27, 2014, the State Legislative Interim Finance Committee approved the transfer of \$286,264 in General Funds to the Washoe County Integration Budget to support the cost of the Pilot Program. This State work program will increase, the Department's FY15 adopted budget by \$286,264 in both revenue and expenditures in the following accounts:

<b>Cost Object</b>	<b>G/L Account</b>	<b>Amount</b>
11083	432100	\$286,264
11083	710709	\$286,264

This item is retroactive as the State approved the transfer of funding on August 27, 2014.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners authorize the Department of Social Services to accept a work program funding in the amount of \$286,264, that was approved by the State Interim Finance Committee (IFC) August 27, 2014, in State General Fund authority to support Specialized Foster Home placements retroactively from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget adjustments.

### **POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to authorize the Department of Social Services to accept a work program funding in the amount of \$286,264, that was approved by the State Interim Finance Committee (IFC) August 27, 2014, in State General Fund authority to support Specialized Foster Home placements retroactively from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015; and direct the Comptroller's Office to make the necessary budget adjustments".